

# NORTH TEXAS INSTITUTE for EDUCATORS on the VISUAL ARTS

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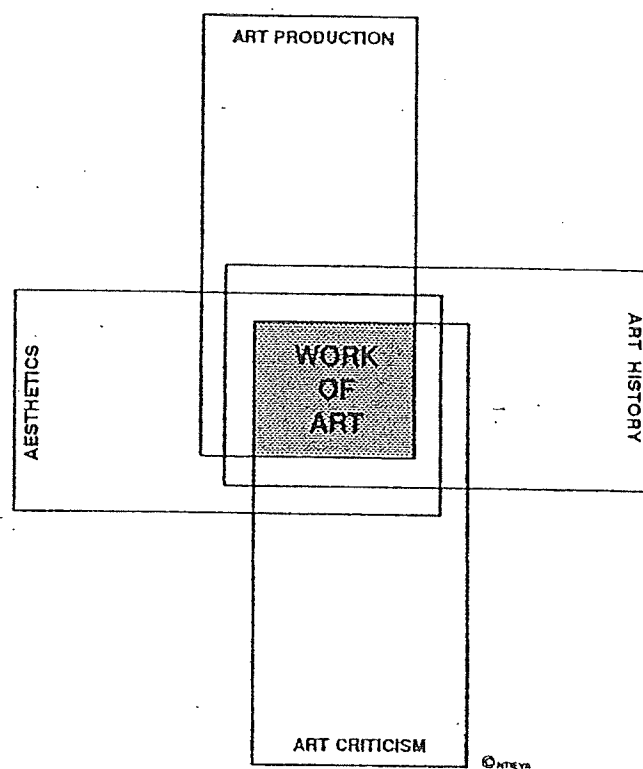
## PICTURING DBAE

Because of its complexity, the instructional approach to art known as Discipline-Based Art Education (DBAE) often seems overwhelming to both art and classroom teachers when first introduced. DBAE centers learning on works of art, integrating content from four foundational art disciplines that contribute to the creation, understanding and appreciation of art: art production, art history, art criticism and aesthetics. This emphasis on teaching the content of art, supported by the National Art Education Association and the Getty Center for Education in the Arts, is more comprehensive than the traditional production-centered methods of art education.

Though this extensive approach is usually new to classroom teachers, frequently it is also new to art teachers who have had little introduction to its concepts in their previous education. In an effort to facilitate understanding of the complex nature of DBAE, the North Texas Institute for Educators on the Visual Arts has developed a conceptual model to illustrate the connections and relationships between the four art disciplines.

The process involved a great deal of collaborative trial and error. As visual learners one and all, we wanted a "picture," a graphic model that would (1) be clearly understood, (2) centrally position the work of art to stress its importance, (3) illustrate the complexity of meaning inherent in a work of art, (4) represent the interrelationships between the four art disciplines, and (5) lend itself to a variety of applications. The difficulty lay in finding visuals that would overlap both the center and each other, depicting the connections between the work of art and each discipline and the connections between the disciplines themselves.

Through the contributions of a number of people (including Nancy Berry's husband, Tom) and the wonders of Pagemaker®, we developed a final model, *Connecting the Disciplines in a Work of Art*, Figure 1, that provides a visual interpretation of DBAE. The diagram also offers use for



The work of art may be an actual art work, a reproduction, a postcard or a slide.

Connecting the Disciplines in a Work of Art  
Figure 1.

translation of theory into practice, for exploration or discovery, to investigate questions relating to the four disciplines about the meaning and function of a work of art.

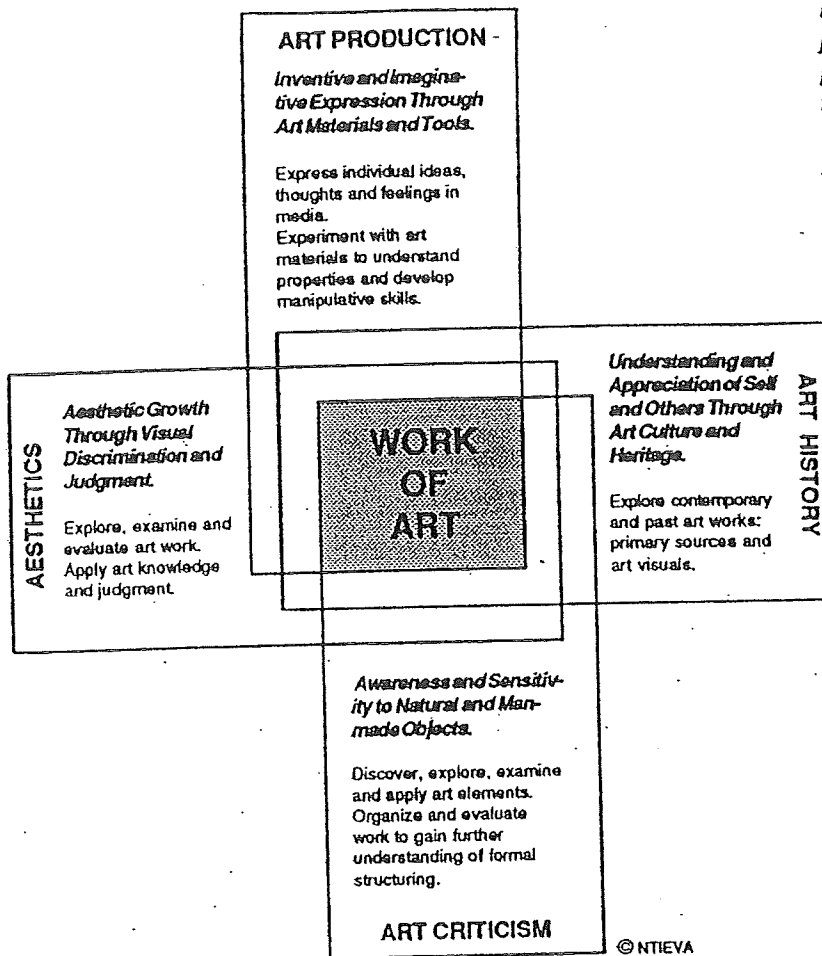
In the diagram, four rectangles, each representing one of the art disciplines, are positioned in a pinwheel formation to overlap and intersect to form a center. The center represents a work of art; each discipline simultaneously overlaps the center and all the other disciplines. We have arbitrarily assigned specific positions to each discipline, but the actual order is not essential as all the disciplines are equal in value.

**ART PRODUCTION**  
making art

**ART HISTORY**  
acquiring knowledge  
about contributions  
artists and art make to  
culture and society

**ART CRITICISM**  
responding to and making  
judgments about the  
properties and qualities  
that exist in works of art

**AESTHETICS**  
discovering and under-  
standing the varieties of  
meanings and values of art



**Correlating Texas Essential Elements with Discipline-Based Art Education**  
Figure 2.

The focus begins with the central work of art; the image used may be an actual art work, a reproduction, a postcard or a slide. Discussion or inquiry may concern the interrelationships of the four disciplines or concentrate primarily on one. The diagram may be used as an individual worksheet by writing appropriate statements or questions in the blank spaces on each of the discipline "playing cards." It may also be enlarged to poster size or projected on a wall for group activities.

Following the initial diagram, we have developed a number of conceptual applications that are helpful in demonstrating the relationship of DBAE to other curriculum content. *Correlating Texas Essential Elements with Discipline-Based Art Education*, Figure 2, shows the four Essential Elements (EEs) of Instruction required in art for each grade level in Texas as they correspond to the four art disciplines. Prescribed by the 67th Texas Legislature in 1981, the Essential Elements identify content and help teachers integrate that content into the classroom.

*NTIEVA has incorporated the instructional targets, domains and objectives of the TAAS into the implementation of DBAE.*

*DBAE, which emphasizes higher level thinking and problem-solving skills, provides effective strategies for correlation with TAAS objectives.*

*Please feel free to copy this article and share it with fellow teachers, parents, and principals and other administrators.*

*For additional copies of the NTIEVA newsletter, write or call: NTIEVA, PO Box 5098, University of North Texas, Denton, TX 76203, 817/565-3986.*

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## Developing Your Own Integrated Art-Social Studies Lessons Using the Discipline-based Art Education Model: A Procedural Guide for Classroom Teachers

James D. Laney  
College of Education, University of North Texas, P.O. Box 13857, Denton, TX  
76203-8857, USA

This article serves as an addendum to the previous article, 'Children's Ideas About Selected Art and Economic Concepts Before and After an Integrated Unit of Instruction'. It is addressed to preservice and inservice teachers and provides a seven-step procedural guide for developing integrated art-social studies lessons using the discipline-based art education model. The seven steps in the process include (1) choosing a social studies concept, (2) locating a work of art, (3) researching the content and context of the image, (4) developing guided discussion questions, (5) developing an art production activity, (6) developing an activity to reinforce the social studies concept, and (7) planning a variety of assessments. Explanations and helpful tips are provided by the author for each step. By following the seven steps, meaningful teaching and learning in both disciplines, art and social studies, is assured.

The preceding article, 'Children's Ideas About Selected Art and Economic Concepts Before and After an Integrated Unit of Instruction', shows that integrating art and social studies can be of benefit to both disciplines. Discipline-based art education (DBAE), which integrates the art disciplines of art history, art criticism, aesthetics, and art production, provides a curriculum development model which can be easily adapted for the purpose of including other non-art disciplines. The following seven procedural steps (and accompanying explanations/tips) on how to develop integrated art-social studies lessons using the DBAE model are offered to preservice and inservice teachers as an aid to their curricular design efforts.

### Step 1

Choose one or more social studies concepts from the school curriculum that have potential for being taught pictorially.

### Step 2

Locate a work of art that constitutes a visual representation of the social studies concept(s) that you have in mind. Ideally, the concept(s) should be tied closely to the meaning/theme of the work of art so that both disciplines (art and social studies) are served by promoting important learnings in each. Sometimes, locating two or three works of art relating to the same concept(s) may be appropriate, especially if you want students to be able to compare and contrast works of art.

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### Step 3

Do some personal research on the work of art you select. Reading what art critics have said about this work of art will help you to know what art concepts to emphasise in your teaching. Also, research the content and context of the image. Knowing the history of a work of art and its creator will better enable you (and your students) to discover its meaning. Possible information resources include the *Encyclopedia of World Art* (1959-present) and the *Illustrated Dictionary of Art and Artists* (1984).

### Step 4

Develop questions to be used during guided discussions. Discussions can be conducted with the whole class or in small, cooperative learning groups. Some possible subtopics for questions are provided below.

#### Art history and social studies

- content and context of image
- sequencing/chronological order of multiple images
- economic history and economic concepts
- content/concepts from various other social science disciplines

#### Art criticism

- use of lines, colours, textures, values, forms, and design structures
- application of unity, emphasis, balance, variety, pattern, and proportion
- art technology
- interpretation and inference-making

#### Aesthetics

- judgments about the application of art elements/principles
- judgments about the artist's message
- judgments of worth/value

### Step 5

Develop at least one art production activity (to be completed by individuals or small groups) that relates to the social studies concept(s) being taught and that provides for creative visual expression and experimentation with 'new' art materials and techniques. Students should be given the chance to self-evaluate their art products using specified criteria. In addition, build in opportunities for creative verbal expression (e.g. by having students write about and/or enact works of art they or others have created).

### Step 6

Develop at least one follow-up activity centring on the social studies concept(s). This activity may or may not be interdisciplinary in nature but should reinforce students' learning by fostering connections between the new learning and students' own background knowledge or past life experiences. Better yet, have the students 'live' the concept(s) in the classroom by providing them with

real-life experiences with the concept(s). For example, in an art-economics lesson, you could present small groups of students with identical sets of raw materials (i.e. art supplies) and have each group use these materials and 'division of labour' to produce its own original art product; then each group could be asked to develop a diagram or chart showing the various kinds of productive resources that went into making its product.

### Step 7

Plan a variety of assessments, with specific criteria for each. Learning can be documented through student-produced 'I learned' statements, summary sheets/paragraphs, charts/tables, pictorial assignments (e.g. art products and diagrams), and other means. Many of these assessments are appropriate for inclusion in student portfolios.

By following the seven steps outlined above, you will be able to develop integrated lessons that have 'validity within and for the disciplines' (Ackerman, 1989: 27). A work of art will serve as the organising centre for instruction, allowing you to bring together, in the same lesson, otherwise unrelated art and economic concepts. The concepts to be taught will not merely be related to their subjects but will be *important* to them. Studying a work of art will help your students better understand social studies concepts, and studying social studies concepts will help your students better discover meaning in a work of art.

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